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**Deval Patrick**




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## GOVERNOR PATRICK CELEBRATES IMMIGRANT ENTREPRENEURSHIP MONTH



(Photo: Matthew Bennett/Governor's Office)

BOSTON – Friday, October 21, 2011 – Governor Deval Patrick today joined the Massachusetts Immigrant and Refugee Advocacy Coalition, the Boston Foundation and immigrant entrepreneurs from across the Commonwealth to celebrate their successes and proclaim October 14 – November 14, 2011 as Immigrant Entrepreneurship Month.

"Immigrants have always been a key component to our state's wealth and success, both in economic and cultural terms," said Governor Patrick. "I am proud to recognize the achievements of immigrant entrepreneurs in Massachusetts and their significant contributions to the Commonwealth's growth."

The proclamation recognizes that immigrant entrepreneurship is vital to the Commonwealth's strong economic growth, continued job creation and maintaining its innovative edge. Governor Patrick presented the proclamation during an event at the Boston Foundation this afternoon.

"We encourage and support an entrepreneurial spirit, which helps to grow our small business and innovative economy," said Lieutenant Governor Timothy Murray. "This month, and throughout the year, we applaud the hard work of successful immigrant entrepreneurs who have launched fresh ideas and made Massachusetts home."

Geographically, Massachusetts is one of the 10 smallest states in the nation, but it ranks eighth in the nation for newcomers, with an immigrant population that approaches 15 percent of the population and that tops 17 percent of the state's workforce. Latino and Asian-owned businesses alone employ over 50,000 Massachusetts residents, with sales receipts of over \$7 billion.

"Massachusetts has a deep history of welcoming innovative entrepreneurs and skilled workers into our communities," said Josiane Martinez, Executive Director of the Massachusetts Office for Refugees and Immigrants (ORI). "These men and women fuel our Commonwealth's economy by creating jobs and promoting new technology and innovation. These capabilities may be connected to unique entrepreneurial resources, such as access to partners, customers and suppliers in their countries of origin."

"Immigrant entrepreneurs in Massachusetts have created about 30 percent of our high growth technology companies," said Vinit Nijhawan, entrepreneur and Managing Director of the Office of Technology Development at Boston University. "Immigrant entrepreneurs have created thousands of high-paying jobs in Massachusetts."

"What this country uniquely provides its immigrants are the freedom and opportunities in a stable and peaceful setting to pursue whatever they want as long as they are willing to work hard," said Jill Cheng, President & CEO of Cheng & Tsui Publishers.

The proclamation was issued based on recommendations from the Governor's Advisory Council for Refugees and Immigrants, stemming from the Patrick-Murray Administration's New Americans Agenda.

On July 9, 2008, Governor Patrick signed Executive Order 503, "Integrating Immigrants and Refugees into the Commonwealth," launching the New Americans Agenda for Massachusetts. The Executive Order calls for the Massachusetts Office for Refugees and Immigrants and the Governor's Advisory Council for Refugees and Immigrants, in partnership with community organizations, to develop and deliver a series of policy recommendations that emphasize the positive integration of these communities into the economic and civic life of the Commonwealth.

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